CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: November 17, 1950.

SUBJECT: Immigration to the United States under the DP Act of Latvian DP's who were formerly members of the Nazi-organized SS Legions in Latvia.

PARTICIPANTS: The Latvian Minister, Mr. J. Feldmans; and Mr. Vedeler and Mr. Johnson, EE; Mr. Dawson, UNA/R.

COPIES TO: VD - Mr. Macgowan
EE - Mr. Vedeler
Mr. Johnson
GPA - Mr. Hadsel
UNA - Two copies

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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The Minister called today at the Department's request. Mr. Vedeler explained that we wished to give him information concerning the action the Department had taken with respect to the Minister's letter of September 27, 1950 to Mr. Johnson and the Legation's ~~aide-memoire~~ note of October ~~19~~ 18, 1950. Both of these communications related to the question of the immigration to the United States under the DP Act of Latvian DP's who were formerly members of the Nazi-organized SS Legions in Latvia and protested the inclusion in a recent DPC field order authorizing the processing of these categories for immigration of a paragraph which strongly suggested that the cases of persons who had been members of the subject legions before April 1943 should be re-examined. The Minister had requested the deletion of the paragraph in question on the grounds that it was extremely prejudicial to the cases of many persons who, although members of the Legion before April 1943, had definitely been drafted into such units and already possessed IRO eligibility. The Minister has stated verbally on many occasions that there should be no deadline at all in this matter, since numbers of Baltic youths were forcibly conscripted in the Latvian Legion from the very outset. However, if any deadline is to be used it should be no later than February 1943. The April 1943 deadline would rule out large numbers of persons forcibly conscripted between February and April.

Mr. Dawson

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Mr. Dawson explained that it was true that IRO has been using the April 1943 deadline in its own determination of eligibility. However, the Department fully shares the Minister's view in this matter and following the receipt of the communications referred to above took the matter up with the DPC with a view to securing the deletion of the controversial paragraph from the DPC basic field operating directive on this subject dated September 15, 1950. The Department is now able to inform the Minister that the Commission has within the past week issued an instruction to its Frankfort office that the paragraph in question be deleted and that all field eligibility officers be so informed. The Commission had also stated that its action in this respect had resulted primarily from the representations made by the Minister.

The Minister stated that he was extremely gratified to hear of the above. However, it was his duty to say that his latest information from DP's in Germany was to the effect that the processing of all Baltic Legion cases is at a standstill. He added that DPC officers were still disqualifying Latvians on grounds of membership in the Legion for whatever reason, and he cited a specific case in this regard of which he had just had news in a letter of November 9 from a Latvian DP in Germany who himself had allegedly been so disqualified by DPC Officer Richter in Augsburg. Mr. Dawson stated that the Department had been definitely informed by one of its consular officers in Germany that the Commission had begun to submit some of the subject cases to the consuls for the issuance of visas. He promised, however, to look into the matter again with the Commission. The Minister, for his part, expressed a desire to recheck with his sources in Germany as to the latest developments before making any further representations in this issue.

During the foregoing discussion it was made clear to the Minister that the possibility that Baltic Legion cases might be held up under the provisions of the National Security Act should not be overlooked. The Minister stated that he was already well aware of this threat to the immigration of his countrymen, and that that was an entirely separate aspect of the question which could be dealt with at the appropriate time.

UNA:UNA/R:LADawson:cmc
11/21/50